

REMARKS

Applicants' request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114 has been accepted and the Examiner has withdrawn the finality of the previous office action. Applicants' amendment filed on September 22, 2005 has also been entered and applicants herein have added new claims 18-25, therefore, claims 2-7, 9, and 11-25 are now pending.

Applicants have added new claims 18-25 solely to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. No new matter has been added.

The Examiner has rejected claims 2-5, 9, and 11-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Berringer et al. (U.S. Pub. No. 2004/0181756 A1).

The Examiner has objected to claims 6-7 and 16-17 "as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims."

Applicants' response below should obviate the need for Applicants to rewrite claims 6, 7, 16 and 17 in independent form. However, should the Examiner refuse to withdraw the rejection of the claims, then Applicants will rewrite claims 6, 7, 16 and 17 as suggested by the Examiner.

As shown by the Applicants below, the Examiner should withdraw the rejection and Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner at her earliest convenience allow each of claims 2-7, 9, and 11-25 to issue as a patent.

**REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(e):**

The Examiner has rejected claims 2-5, 9, and 11-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Berringer et al. Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner and as discussed below, claims 2-5, 9, and 11-15 are not anticipated by Berringer et al. and, therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw her rejection.

Berringer et al. teaches a method for signing, endorsing and recording completed documents. Berringer et al. states that an electronic document "passes through various states as it is created or generated. The document is in a signable state when all necessary information or content . . . is present in the electronic document." (Pg. 4, ¶ 0050). The only discussion in Berringer et al. about creation of the document or entering content into a document is a general description of the fact that preparing an electronic document may include entering data or content into a template or creating the document without the use of a

template (pg. 4, ¶ 0042). Berringer et al. does not in any way teach or suggest interactive processing and creation of documents by more than one person. It only discusses that after the content has been entered, i.e., after the document has been created, the document may be digitally signed (pg. 4, ¶ 0043). The digital signing taught by Berringer et al. is the entering of a digital signature of the person signing the electronic document into the electronic document in a signature block (pg. 4, ¶ 0043). This electronic signing of the electronic file by one or more persons involves adding coding to the file representative of the persons' signature. The "digital signature routine" as recited in Applicants' claims is very different as it involves "performing" a "digital signature routine" on the "digital file to obtain" a "digital signature" of the "digital file." This does not create a signature or coding representative of the person signing the electronic document as taught by Berringer et al.

Berringer et al. does not in any way teach or suggest "providing at least one request to a first user at a first location on a computer network for information used to complete the document," "receiving at least one response to the at least one request from the first user used to complete the document," "writing information obtained from the at least one response from the first user to at least one digital file," "performing a first digital signature routine on the at least one digital file to obtain a first digital signature of the at least one digital file," "creating a first time stamp corresponding to the time of submission of the information obtained from the at least one response from the first user," "providing at least one request to a second user at a second location on the computer network for information used to complete the document," "receiving at least one response to the at least one request from the second user used to complete the document," "writing information obtained from the at least one response from the second user to the at least one digital file," "performing a second digital signature routine on the at least one digital file to obtain a second digital signature of the at least one digital file," or "creating a second time stamp corresponding to the time of submission of the information obtained from the at least one response from the second user," each as recited in claim 9. Therefore, Berringer et al. cannot anticipate claim 9 of the present application.

Because Berringer et al. does not anticipate claim 9, it cannot anticipate any of claims 2-7 of the present application. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw her rejection of claims 2-7 and 9.

Berringer et al. does not in any way teach or suggest a system including a program operative to "send at least one request determined from a selected document to a first user at

a first location on a computer network,” “receive at least one response to the at least one request from the first user,” “write information obtained from the at least one response from the first user to at least one digital file,” “determine a first time stamp from the timing device corresponding to the receipt of the at least one response to the at least one request from the first user,” “perform a first digital signature routine on the at least one digital file to obtain an original digital signature,” “send at least one request determined from the selected document to a second user at a second location on a computer network,” “receive at least one response to the at least one request from the second user,” “write information obtained from the at least one response from the second user to at least one digital file,” “determine a second time stamp from the timing device corresponding to the receipt of the at least one response to the at least one request from the second user,” or “perform a second digital signature routine on the at least one digital file to obtain an original digital signature,” each as recited in claim 11. Therefore, Berringer et al. cannot anticipate claim 11 of the present application.

Because Berringer et al. does not anticipate claim 11, it cannot anticipate any of claims 12-17 of the present application. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw her rejection of claims 11, and 12-17.

For the same reasons as recited above with respect to claims 2-5, 9 and 11-15, Berringer et al. either alone or in any known combination does not anticipate or make obvious any of new claims 18-25.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER:

The Examiner has objected to claims 6-7 and 16-17 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but has indicated that those claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for acknowledging the allowability of claims 6-7 and 16-17. Applicants believe that based on the above remarks, the Examiner’s requirement to rewrite the claims in independent form should not be necessary. Should the Examiner uphold the rejection of claims 2-5, 9, and 11-15, Applicants plan to rewrite claims 6-7 and 16-17 in independent form as suggested by the Examiner.

Docket No. 81300520-0008-043  
Application No. 09/943,670  
Group Art Unit: 2165

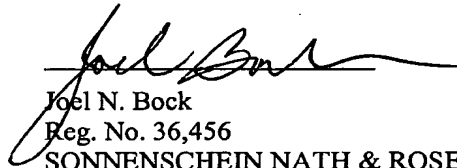
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, each of the claims of the above referenced application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and Applicants respectfully requested that the Examiner at her earliest convenience withdraw her rejection of the claims and issue a notice of allowance.

Applicants' undersigned attorney can be reached at (973) 912-7174 if the Examiner believes that oral communication with Applicants' attorney will expedite issuance of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: March 13, 2006

  
Joel N. Bock  
Reg. No. 36,456  
SONNENSCHN NATH & ROSENTHAL  
P.O. Box 061080  
Wacker Drive Station - Sears Tower  
Chicago, Illinois 60606-1080  
Phone: (312) 876-8000